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## Officials Call Attacks a Surprise; Questions Raised on Marine Role

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 30 — Reagan Administration officials said today that the intensified attacks on Marine positions in Beirut had caught them by surprise and had raised new questions about the role of American forces in Lebanon.

Despite growing pressure from Congress for the President to invoke special provisions of the War Powers Resolution because of the fighting, President Reagan this afternoon refused to acknowledge any basic change in the situation.

The White House made public a letter from Mr. Reagan to Congress asserting that a truce had been achieved and "diplomatic efforts were under way to extend the cease-fire." He said

he was keeping Congress abreast of the situation but declined to invoke that portion of the War Powers Resolution that would force him to withdraw the marines after 90 days unless Congress voted its approval of keeping them there.

### Beirut Quieter at Night

"I believe that the continued presence of these U.S. forces in Lebanon is essential to the objective of helping to restore the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon," he said. "It is still not possible to predict the duration of the presence of these forces in Lebanon. We will continue to assess this question in the light of progress toward this objective."

But the State Department, in a report issued at 6 P.M. today, was less categorical about a cease-fire. It said only that as of 4:30 P.M. (10:30 P.M., Beirut time) "the situation was becoming more quiet in Beirut."

Because of the attacks on American positions throughout the Beirut area, Vice President Bush convened a crisis-management group for the second day.

Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, talking to reporters in Santa Barbara, Calif., where Mr. Reagan is on vacation, seemed to be opposing invoking the war powers provision when he said the fighting was "an isolated incident."

"If we were conducting combat operations, then it would be different," he said. "But we're not. The role there is as a peacekeeping force."

Mr. Reagan remained at his mountain ranch near Santa Barbara, relaxing, Mr. Speakes said. He spoke for about 10 minutes over the phone with William P. Clark, the national security adviser, and Edwin Meese 3d, the White House counselor, both of whom were at the Biltmore Hotel in Santa Barbara with other White House staff members.

Mr. Bush told Mr. Meese he was convoking the crisis group, known formally as the Special Situation Group. Others included in it were Secretary of State George P. Shultz, Mr. Weinberger, Deputy Director John McMahon of the Central Intelligence Agency and Gen. John W. Vessey Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This group, according to an aide, has been gathering information about events in the Middle East and has been making recommendations, generally forwarded by Mr. Bush to the President by telephone.